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PRESENTED HERE WAS A STUDY GUIDE FOR STUDENT USE IN A SEVENTH-GRADE LITERATURE CURRICULUM. BACKGROUND INFORMATION, QUESTIONS, AND ACTIVITIES WERE INCLUDED FOR UNITS ON ORIENTATION TO LITERATURE, TRADITIONAL BALLADS, AND LITERARY BALLADS. A BOOK OF BALLADS REFERENCE WAS INCLUDED ALSO. AN ACCOMPANYING GUIDE WAS PREPARED FOR TEACHER USE (ED 010 136). (WN)

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

ORIENTATION TO LITERATURE

BALLADS

ORIENTATION
TRADITIONAL BALLAD
LITERARY BALLAD
BOOK OF BALLADS

Literature Curriculum I
Student Version

ED 010 135

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

GENERAL ORIENTATION UNIT

Literature Curriculum I

Student Version

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Introduction to Orientation Unit

We are born into a world we know nothing about. As we grow up we learn more about that world. We learn that just as we are thinking animals, creatures of senses and mind, so is our world a world of senses and mind. It contains stones we can stub our toes on, and it contains ideas we can stub our minds on.

We can learn about stones with our toes, but we learn about ideas with our minds. Since we cannot touch an idea, the only way we can learn about any ideas except our own is to be told about them by the person who is thinking them. In earlier and simpler days, children listened while the elders talked; the voice and the ear were the means of exchanging ideas. Then man developed writing and reading. This is a system which substitutes the hand and the eye for the voice and the ear. This system means we no longer have to sit and listen; we can learn the ideas of people on the other side of the world as well as those who have been dead for centuries.

Since there are so many people in the world that we cannot hear them all, and since people have been writing down their ideas instead of telling them for thousands of years, reading is our most important way of finding out about the world of people's thoughts. The more we know about the world around us, the more successfully we can live in it. And since reading is our most important means of finding out about that half of our world which is made up of ideas, not stones, the better we are able to use the tool of reading the better we will be able to live in the world. An important purpose of this course is to teach you one kind of reading.

The kind of reading this course is concerned with is hard to define. Perhaps it would be easiest to say what it is not. It is not the kind of reading you use to follow roadsigns, although it can be about a journey. It is not the kind of reading you use to find out from the back of the wrapper what is in the candy bar, although it can be about hunger. It is not the kind of reading you use to find out what an amoeba is, although it can be about science. It is not the kind of reading you use to find out who Thomas Jefferson was, although it can be about history. It is not the kind of reading you use with a newspaper, although it can be about what happens everyday.

All these kinds of reading convey facts to our minds, like a conveyor belt moving goods from one place to another. The kind of reading this course is concerned with is that in which the conveyor belt is as important as the goods. In other words, in this course the way something is said is as important as what is being said. Indeed, in this kind of reading the conveyor belt and the goods become almost the same thing.

You are already familiar with this sort of reading, although you may not ever have bothered to think about it or put it into words. But did you ever stop to think why you read and re-read some favorite stories, and only read others once? It can't be because you want to know how the story comes out--you learned that the first time. No, it is because that particular story interests you, and has a certain effect on you which you particularly like. In other words, the way that story is said has become as important to you as what is being said. Indeed, the way the thing is said is part of what is being said, so much so that you can't separate the subject from the form it takes.

One of the things this course is concerned with is to help you see and understand the way authors arouse your interest and the way they use words to create the effects that appeal to you. Perhaps you might want to keep in mind as you go into this course in literature that the kind of reading you are doing is that in which the way a thing is said is a part of what is being said.

In this introduction to the study of literature you are going to be asked to read four pieces of writing. Each is quite different from the others. Literature can be about anything, and so the subjects of these four works are a man taking a walk in the spring; a white man and a native taking a journey in a small boat through the South Seas; a man watching an ant; and a man getting devoured by rats.

Literature can take any form, and so some of these four works are in prose and others in poetry. Literature can be organized in any way, and so some of the prose and poetry is organized around a story line or <u>plot</u>, and some is not.

Literature can be written from any position the writer chooses to take, and so some of the selections are in the first person, in which the author is "I," and some are in the third person, in which the author is outside his subject and talks about "he" or "it."

But no matter what it is about, or what form it takes, or what position the writer takes or what idea he is trying to communicate, remember as you read and study these selections that you are as concerned with the way the thing is said as you are with what is being said.

I. Narrative Poem. Robert Southey, "Bishop Hatto"

<u>Introduction</u>

The following narrative tells of a man who burned up some poor, starving people in a barn and was then eaten by rats even when he thought he was safe. The story is built on an old legend; even today, those who

travel down the Rhine River in Germany can see the dark mysterious "Mouse Tower" where Bishop Hatto was supposed to have met his fate.

As you read this poem, see if you can determine why the Bishop burned up the barn in the first place. Then, when do you begin to sense that he will "pay" for his crime? Do you think his final fate is just?

Bishop Hatto

(1) The summer and autumn had been so wet
That in winter the corn was growing yet;
'Twas a piteous sight to see all around
The grain lie rotting on the ground.

(2) Every day the starving poor
Crowded around Bishop Hatto's door,
For he had a plentiful last year's store,
And all the neighbourhood could tell
His granaries were furnish'd well.

(3) At last Bishop Hatto appointed a day
To quiet the poor without delay;
He bade them to his great barn repair,
And they should have food for the winter there.

(4) Rejoiced such tidings good to hear,
The poor folk flock'd from far and near;
The great barn was full as it could hold
Of women and children, and young and old.

(5) Then when he saw it could hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the door;
And while for mercy on Christ they call,
He set fire to the barn and burnt them all.

(6) "I' faith, 'tis an excellent bonfire!" quoth he,
"And the country is greatly obliged to me,
For ridding it in these times forlorn
Of rats, that only consume the corn."

(7) So then to his palace returned he,
And he sat down to supper merrily,
And he slept that night like an innocent man
But Bishop Hatto never slept again.

(8) In the morning as he enter'd the hall,
Where his picture hung against the wall,
A sweat like death all over him came,
For the rats had eaten it out of the frame.

(9) As he look'd there came a man from the farm,
He had a countenance white with alarm;

"My lord, I open'd your granaries this morn,
And the rats had eaten all your corn."

(10) Another came running presently,
And he was pale as pale could be,
"Fly! my Lord Bishop, fly," quoth he,
"Ten thousand rats are coming this way--
The Lord forgive you for yesterday!"

(11) "I'll go to my tower on the Rhine," replied he,
"'Tis the safest place in Germany;
The walls are high, and the shores are steep,
And the stream is strong, and the water deep."

(12) Bishop Hatto fearfully hasten'd away,
And he cross'd the Rhine without delay,
And reach'd his tower, and barr'd with care
All the windows, doors, and loopholes there.

(13) He laid him down and closed his eyes,
But soon a scream made him arise;
He started, and saw two eyes of flame
On his pillow from whence the screaming came.

(14) He listen'd and look'd; it was only the cat;
But the Bishop he grew more fearful for that,
For she sat screaming, mad with fear,
At the army of rats that was drawing near.

(15) For they have swum over the river so deep,
And they have climb'd the shores so steep,
And up the tower their way is bent
To do the work for which they were sent.

(16) They are not to be told by the dozen or score,
By thousands they come, and by myriads and more;
Such numbers had never been heard of before,
Such a judgment had never been witness'd of yore.

(17) Down on his knees the Bishop fell,
And faster and faster his beads did he tell,
As louder and louder drawing near
The gnawing of their teeth he could hear.

(18) And in at the windows, and in at the door,
And through the walls helter-skelter they pour,
And down from the ceiling, and up through the floor,
From right and left, from behind and before,
From within and without, from above and below,
And all at once to the Bishop they go.

(19) They have whetted their teeth against the stones,
And now they pick the Bishop's bones;
They gnaw'd the flesh from every limb,
For they were sent to do judgment on him.

Questions and Activities

1. How does the weather play an important part in the poem?

2. Why, thus, do the poor gather around the Bishop's door?

3. Why does he burn them up?

4. How long does he enjoy his triumph?

5. This poem tells a story. Can you retell the story in your own words?

6. Except for the second and the eighteenth, all of the stanzas in the poem contain four lines (that is, they are quatrains). How do the stanzas rhyme? Are they all the same?

7. As an experiment, sing a few stanzas of the poem to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel." Does the tune always fit the poem exactly?

8. If this poem were used as the basis for a movie, what kind of movie would it be? Explain in detail.

9. Some of the words in this poem may seem strange to you. By using a dictionary, try to determine what these words mean in this poem: appointed (3rd stanza), repair (3rd stanza), tidings (4th stanza), made fast (5th stanza), countenance (9th stanza), loopholes (12th stanza), told (16th stanza--see "tell" in your dictionary), myriads (16th stanza), yore (16th stanza), beads (17th stanza), tell (17th stanza).

10. On the Rhine, near the city of Mainz, there is a structure called the Mouse Tower. Do you think there is some connection between the Mouse Tower and the poem?

11. What kind of man is it who would call starving people "rats, that only consume the corn?"

12. What kind of man is it who eats supper merrily and sleeps "like an innocent man" after burning a barnful of innocent people?

13. What is the first warning that the tide is turning for the Bishop? The second?

14. What is the first sign that the tower is not the safe retreat the Bishop thought it would be?

15. What stanzas are the beginning of the story? What stanzas are the middle--the part of the poem where things begin to turn around? The end?

16. How does the teller of the tale seem to feel about the events? Does he take part in the action or merely report it? Does he ever say definitely how he feels about Bishop Hatto? But do you know how he feels about him? Back up your judgment with proof from the text.

17. Why do you think Southey told his story in the form of a poem? Would it be more interesting if it were in prose?

18. Who might the rats be?

19. How can the Bishop's death be considered a just one?

20. What would you say is the subject of this poem? Is it only about a man who burns up a barn and is eaten in return? Or is it about anything else? Could we say that the poem is about things we can touch (towers, cats, rats) and about things we cannot touch but rather sense (fear, cruelty)?

21. How do most people feel about rats? Does this feeling have any effect on your reaction to the poem? Would the effect be less if the Bishop were devoured by lions instead of rats?

22. Does a religious attitude enter the poem? Explain what the attitude is and justify your answer by referring to the poem.

23. How does the saying "He got what was coming to him" apply to the poem? Find out the meaning of poetic justice. Do you see any poetic justice in "Bishop Hatto?"

II. Lyric Poem. A. E. Housman, "Loveliest of Trees"

The next selection you are asked to read is a short lyric poem. "Lyric" originally meant a song that was supposed to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre (a kind of harp), but now it is a sort of catchall term used to describe almost any short poem. This lyric, by A. E. Housman, an Englishman, was written about 1896. It deals with a theme that is common to all people of any race and any time--enjoy beauty while you can, for death is just around the corner.

The poem that you are to read describes the thoughts and emotions that the blossoming of cherry trees inspires in the poet. Like many lyrics, this one goes beyond mere description of something beautiful and tries to find in its subject a "meaning" that will provide a flash of insight into the nature of life. We must remember, however, that poems are, first of all, works of art that are intended to appeal to us on many levels besides the intellectual. So we should not view "Loveliest of Trees" as a good or bad poem just because of the "meaning" that the poet puts into it. Furthermore, we should not be narrow-minded in our reading. We must not condemn the poem if it expresses a viewpoint different from our own.

"Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now"

(See selection taken from "A Shropshire Lad"--Authorized Edition--from The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman, copyright by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1959.)

Questions and Activities

1. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

2. How many is a score?

3. Explain some of the most important differences between "Loveliest of Trees" and "Bishop Hatto."

4. Do you think that a man should spend his time writing about cherry trees in bloom? How is the poet's interest in cherry trees different from that of the botanist and the farmer?

5. Is there a "story" to the poem?

6. Why does the poet say that the cherry tree is hung with snow?

7. In your own words, explain what the poem says about how you should live.

8. In the poem, how old does the poet say he is? What season of the year does the poem talk about? Is there any relationship between the poet's age and the season discussed in the poem? Explain.

9. Might the cherry tree in the poem "mean" more than just a tree?

10. Rewrite the poem in prose. Does it lose anything? What?

11. "Loveliest of Trees" is one of the most popular poems in the English language. Why do you think it has such broad appeal?

12. Look at the first stanza of the poem. It says that the cherry tree is "wearing white for Eastertide." To what does the poem, in its use of the word "wearing," compare the cherry tree? (Can a tree really "wear" anything?)

13. Is Housman writing about the world of the senses or the world of the mind? In other words, is this poem about an experience, or a man's reaction to it, or both? Would it have been possible to write about one without the other?

14. Discuss the meaning of "point of view" with your teacher. Do you think it would have made any difference to the poem if it were written from the third person point of view?

15. What is the "mood" of the poem? Can you think of some words that describe the mood?

16. Is the poet speaking of what he thinks or of what someone else thinks? How do you know?

17. In the dictionary, look up the meaning of carpe diem. How does this term apply to the poem?

18. Read Shakespeare's sonnet "That Time of Year," in Immortal Poems p. 62. In what ways does it compare to "Loveliest of Trees?"

19. Read "To Celia," by Ben Jonson, Immortal Poems, p. 79. Is it familiar to you? Where have you heard it? It is also a lyric poem. On the basis of these two poems--and on the basis of your understanding of the word "lyric"--can you give a tentative definition of lyric poetry? (How does the word "lyre" relate to lyric poetry?)

III. Essay. Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens). "The Laborious Ant."

You may have read Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn. Here is another one of his writings. Mark Twain (1835-1910) was one of America's greatest writers. A humorist, essayist, and novelist, he created works that are still popular. He achieved success with the publication of short stories and of Tom Sawyer (1876). In 1879 he took a walking tour through Europe, sending back his observations on Europe (and other things) in the form of letters. These observations were collected in a book, A Tramp Abroad, published in 1880. "The Laborious Ant" is from that book, although the subject of this essay does not have any necessary connection with Europe.

The Laborious Ant

We found an old road, and it proved eventually to be the right one, though we followed it at the time with the conviction that it was the wrong one. If it was the wrong one there could be no use in hurrying, therefore we did not hurry, but sat down frequently on the soft moss and enjoyed the restful quiet and shade of the forest solitudes. There had been distractions in the carriage-road--school-children, peasants, wagons, troops of pedestrianizing students from all over Germany--but we had the old road to ourselves.

Now and then, while we rested, we watched the laborious ant at his work. I found nothing new in him--certainly nothing to change my opinion of him. It seems to me that in the matter of intellect the ant must be a strangely overrated bird. During many summers, now, I have watched him, when I ought to have been in better business, and I have not yet come across a living ant that seemed to have any more sense than a dead one. I refer to the ordinary ant, of course; I have had no experience of those wonderful Swiss and African ones which vote, keep drilled armies, hold slaves, and dispute about religion. Those particular ants may be all that the naturalist paints them, but I am persuaded that the average ant is a sham. I admit his industry, of course; he is the hardest-working creature in the world--when anybody is looking--but his leatherheadedness is the point I make against him. He goes out foraging, he makes a capture, and then what does he do? Go home? No--he goes anywhere but home. He doesn't know where home is. His home may be only three feet away--no matter, he can't find it. He makes his capture, as I have said; it is generally something which can be of no sort of use to himself or anybody else; it is usually seven times bigger than it ought to be; he hunts out the awkwardest place to take hold of it; he lifts it bodily up in the air by main force, and starts; not toward home, but in the opposite direction; not calmly and wisely, but with a frantic haste which is wasteful of his strength; he fetches up against a pebble, and instead of going around it, he climbs over it backward dragging his booty after him, tumbles down on the other side, jumps up in a passion, kicks the dust off his clothes, moistens his hands, grabs his property viciously, yanks it this way, then that, shoves it ahead of him a moment, turns tail and lugs it after him another moment, gets madder and madder, then presently hoists it into the air and goes tearing away in an entirely new direction; comes to a weed; it never occurs to him to go around it; no, he must climb it; and he does climb it, dragging his worthless property to the top--which is as bright a thing to do as it would be for me to carry a sack of flour from Heidelberg to Paris by way of Strasburg steeple; when he gets up there he finds that that is not the place; takes a cursory glance at the scenery and either climbs down again or tumbles down, and starts off once more--as usual, in a new direction. At the end of half an hour, he fetches up within six inches of the place he started from and lays his burden down; meantime he has been over all the ground for two yards around, and climbed all the weeds and pebbles he came across. Now he wipes the sweat from his brow, strokes his limbs, and then marches aimlessly off, in as violent a hurry as ever. He traverses a good deal of zigzag country, and by and by stumbles on his same booty again. He does not remember to have ever seen it before; he looks around to see which is not the way home, grabs his bundle and starts; he goes through the same adventures he had before; finally stops to rest, and a friend comes along. Evidently the friend remarks that a last year's grasshopper leg is a very noble acquisition, and inquires where he got it. Evidently the proprietor does not remember exactly where he did get it, but thinks he got it "around here somewhere." Evidently the friend contracts to help him freight it home. Then, with a judgment peculiarly antic (pun not intentional), they take hold of opposite ends of that grasshopper leg and begin to tug with all their might in opposite directions. Presently they take a rest and confer together. They decide that something is wrong, they can't make out what. Then they go at it again, just as before. Same result. Mutual recriminations follow. Evidently each accuses the other of being an

obstructionist. They warm up, and the dispute ends in a fight. They lock themselves together and chew each other's jaws for a while; then they roll and tumble on the ground till one loses a horn or a leg and has to haul off for repairs. They make up and go to work again in the same old insane way, but the crippled ant is at a disadvantage; tug as he may, the other one drags off the booty and him at the end of it. Instead of giving up, he hangs on, and gets his shins bruised against every obstruction that comes in the way. By and by, when that grasshopper leg has been dragged all over the same old ground once more, it is finally dumped at about the spot where it originally lay, the two perspiring ants inspect it thoughtfully and decide that dried grasshopper legs are a poor sort of property after all, and then each starts off in a different direction to see if he can't find an old nail or something else that is heavy enough to afford entertainment and at the same time valueless enough to make an ant want to own it.

There in the Black Forest, on the mountainside, I saw an ant go through with such a performance as this with a dead spider of fully ten times his own weight. The spider was not quite dead, but too far gone to resist. He had a round body the size of a pea. The little ant--observing that I was noticing--turned him on his back, sunk his fangs into his throat, lifted him into the air and started vigorously off with him, stumbling over little pebbles, stepping on the spider's legs and tripping himself up, dragging him backward, shoving him bodily ahead, dragging him up stones six inches high instead of going around them, climbing weeds twenty times his own height and jumping from their summits--and finally leaving him in the middle of the road to be confiscated by any other fool of an ant that wanted him. I measured the ground which this ass traversed, and arrived at the conclusion that what he had accomplished inside of twenty minutes would constitute some such job as this--relatively speaking--for a man; to wit: to strap two eight-hundred-pound horses together, carry them eighteen hundred feet, mainly over (not around) boulders averaging six feet high, and in the course of the journey climb up and jump from the top of one precipice like Niagara, and three steeples, each a hundred and twenty feet high; and then put the horses down, in an exposed place, without anybody to watch them, and go off to indulge in some other idiotic miracle for vanity's sake.

Science has recently discovered that the ant does not lay up anything for winter use. This will knock him out of literature, to some extent. He does not work, except when people are looking, and only then when the observer has a green, naturalistic look, and seems to be taking notes. This amounts to deception, and will injure him for the Sunday-schools. He has not judgment enough to know what is good to eat from what isn't. This amounts to ignorance, and will impair the world's respect for him. He cannot stroll around a stump and find his way home again. This amounts to idiocy, and once the damaging fact is established, thoughtful people will cease to look up to him, the sentimental will cease to fondle him. His vaunted industry is but a vanity and of no effect, since he never gets home with anything he starts with. This disposes of the last remnant of his reputation and wholly destroys his main usefulness as a moral agent, since it will make the sluggard hesitate to go to him any more. It is strange, beyond comprehension, that so manifest a humbug as the ant has been able to fool so many nations and keep it up so many ages without being found out.

From A TRAMP ABROAD, 1880

Questions and Activities

1. In your own words, tell what you think the main purpose of this essay is.

2. Why do you think Twain goes to such lengths of detail in his description of the ant's activities?

3. Was this essay funny? If you thought it was, can you say what made it funny?

4. Good writing is usually vivid. Can you find any words or phrases in this essay which strike you as particularly vivid?

5. A good piece of writing has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Wher would you place the beginning, middle, and end of this essay? What purpose is served by each paragraph?

6. What does the following sentence mean? "I refer to the ordinary ant, of course; I have had no experience with those wonderful Swiss and African ones which vote, keep drilled armies, hold slaves, and dispute about religion." What does Twain think of Swiss and African ants?

7. The last paragraph in the essay follows a very definite arrangement. Can you say what it is? Why do you think Twain used this arrangement? What effect does it have?

8. "The Laborious Ant" is an essay. On the basis of your understanding of the word "essay," can you tell why it is so called? How does the essay differ from a story?

Suggestions for Writing

1. Can you think of any other animal who also has a reputation? The elephant is supposed to have a great memory; or the owl is supposed to be wise; or the dog is supposed to be man's best friend. Try to write a humorous essay in which you explode one of these beliefs. Be sure to write an essay and not a story.

2. Make a collection of all the examples you can find of exaggeration used for comic purposes. You will find many in common sayings, conversation, or books and television.

3. Write a description of the activities of an animal or person in which you use as many vivid words as you can.

4. Write an essay in which you defend the ant against Twain's attack.

IV. Short Story. John Russell, "The Price of the Head"

You have read about the South Seas, and lovely islands of white sand, blue water, coral reefs, and waving palm trees. You have read of beachcombers, natives, traders, and cannibals. You have read of long voyages through those seas by flimsy native boats. Here is another story about the South Seas, about a drunken beachcomber and a native who befriends him. It is an exciting story: we want to find out what happens as the beachcomber and the native sail their little canoe across eight hundred miles of open ocean. But notice as you read that the author also arouses our interest in another mystery: why does the native befriend the white man? He puts this question in the beginning of the story and answers it at the end.

Since we are concerned in this course with the way a thing is said, it might be well to point out one or two things to keep in mind as you read. The first thing to notice is the way the story is put together. It is the story of a journey; it starts at one place, tells of a long journey, and ends at another place. You could draw a diagram of the story like this:

X ——————————— X
(Fufuti) (the journey) (Bougainville)

This is about as simple a diagram for a story as you could think of. Incidents are hung on this basic pattern like wash on a clothesline.

The second thing to notice is connected with the first. We said above that the author arouses our interest in a mystery as well as in the journey. Notice that he keeps our interest in both alive all through the story, and that at the end our interest in both problems is satisfied at the same time. This is a neat trick. If he answered one before the other we would get bored; if he answered one without bothering with the other we would feel cheated. But he winds the two together and brings them both to an end at the same time.

We said in the introduction to this course that our world is a world of senses and mind, a world of stones and ideas. You saw in "Loveliest of Trees" how Housman was concerned with both the senses and the mind. This story too is about both senses and mind--a journey in a boat, and friendship.

Read the story carefully, and then think about the study questions as you read it again.

"The Price of the Head"

(For selection "The Price of the Head" see Where the Pavement Ends, by John Russell, copyright, 1917, by P. F. Collier & Son, reprinted by permission of Brandt & Brandt.)

Questions and Activities

1. There will be many unfamiliar words in this story. Make a list of them, and look up their meanings in a dictionary.

2. In the story, there may be certain passages that you do not understand. Be sure to have your teacher explain these passages to you.

3. During the story, Karaki does many things for Pellett. What things can you find, not necessarily physical, that Pellett does for himself?

4. In your own words, give a short summary of the story.

5. Who "tells" the story? Have you ever read a story in which the author speaks as if he took part in the events?

6. At the beginning of the story, Russell lists Pellett's possessions. At the end, he gives a "corrected" list. Each list contains five things. How do the two lists differ? Which set of possessions does Russell think more valuable? Which does Pellett? Which does Karaki? Which do you?

7. If Karaki is going to kill Pellett, how can he be considered Pellett's "good friend?" Do you think Karaki acted as he did through friendship?

8. What is the author's apparent attitude toward Pellett?

9. What is the author's apparent attitude toward Melanesians? (See paragraphs four, five, and six.)

10. What do "The Price of the Head" and "Bishop Hatto" have in common?

11. Name some important differences between "The Price of the Head" and "The Laborious Ant."

12. Were you surprised to find the reason for Karaki's friendship for Pellett? Might you have suspected the outcome? Where in the story do you find clues about what is going to happen?

13. Russell tells us that the white man is saved by the black from drink, illness, madness, starvation, and ravening waters. In what other way is Pellett "saved" by Karaki? Is Karaki aware of this other kind of salvation?

14. In what way can this story be called a voyage of discovery? Who discovers what? Would it be fair to say that the subject of this story is only a voyage? If not, what else is it about?

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

THE TRADITIONAL BALLAD

Literature Curriculum I

Student Version

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THE TRADITIONAL BALLAD

Introduction

Like "Bishop Hatto," the traditional ballad tells a story. That is, it is a type of narrative poetry. But it also has certain characteristics that make it different from other types of narrative poetry. Once you have learned to recognize these characteristics, you will be able to identify most traditional ballads, and you will probably enjoy reading them more than you would if you did not understand their workings. Who wrote the ballads? How did people learn them? Are there any modern ballads?

The answers to these questions come from an understanding of what the ballad is. It is an extremely popular kind of folk literature; it genuinely belongs to the people, and it comes from the people of all times. Research shows that early in the history of European peoples, ballads were known and loved. If King Arthur really did exist, he probably heard and knew a great many ballads. And anyone who listens to modern balladeers such as Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Harry Belafonte knows that some ballads speak about modern events. Thus, the history of the ballad extends from the dim ages of the past up to the present moment.

Anyone who has ever listened to modern folk singers also knows that ballads are intended to be sung, frequently with musical accompaniment. Most ballads are anonymous; that is, we do not know who composed them. Probably they begin with a ballad singer making up his song to tell some story that he thinks is important or interesting. That story may concern history, a current event, love, death, hate, valor --or any other subject. In America, many ballads concern the railroads, the logging industry, famous badmen, and the cowboy. English ballads quite often speak of the sea or of kings and queens and lords and ladies. At any rate, the ballad singer chooses his subject and makes up his ballad. Then he sings it for people who in turn learn it, sing it, change it, add to it. Some ballads have many different versions, and some have hundreds of verses that have been added over the years. Such a ballad is "Frankie and Johnny."

Originally, ballads were passed from person to person by word of mouth. One singer learned the song from another. This is still the main way in which ballads are passed on. In this respect, they are like any song. (We seldom learn our songs from books, but rather by hearing them.) If you will think about it, you will discover that you know several or perhaps quite a few ballads. Think of "Oh, Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" and "The Streets of Laredo."

Often, ballads are composed in a special form called the ballad stanza. In your study of this unit, you will probably

learn to recognize the ballad stanza. Also, the ballads often employ repetition to tell their story. One basic stanza will be repeated several times, but each time with a slight change that helps us to understand the story. This characteristic of the ballad is called incremental repetition. Your teacher will undoubtedly explain the ballad stanza and incremental repetition.

If you compare the ballads that you read to other types of narratives ("Bishop Hatto" or "The Price of the Head," for instance), you will find that the ballad relies much more on hints than do other narrative poems and short stories. That is, the ballad gives you a hint about what will happen or what has happened, and you must then draw your own conclusion. The ballad is quite likely to make big jumps in the story from event to event without telling the reader or listener exactly how or why the jump is made; the imagination must fill in the details and supply the reasons.

Ballads are also a wonderful illustration of one important point about literature: it is written to be enjoyed by everyone, not merely by a select few.

Assignment 1

Read "Sir Patrick Spens" silently as your teacher plays the recording.

Sir Patrick Spens

1. The king sits in Dunfermling town
   Drinking the blude-red wine;
   "O where will I get a gude skipper
   To sail this ship o' mine?"

2. O up and spoke an elder knight,
   Sat at the king's right knee:
   "Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
   That ever sail'd the sea."

3. The king has written a broad letter,
   And seal'd it with his hand,
   And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
   Was walking on the sand.

4. "To Noroway, to Noroway,
   To Noroway o'er the foam;
   The king's daughter o'Noroway,
   Tis thou must bring her home."

5. The first word that Sir Patrick read,
   A loud laugh laughed he;
   The next word that Sir Patrick read,
   The tear blinded his eye.

6. "O who is this has done this deed,
This ill deed done to me,
To send us out, this time o' year,
To sail upon the sea?

7. "Be it wind, be it wet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the foam;
The king's daughter o'Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her home.

8. "Make haste, make haste, my merry men all;
Our gude ship sails the morn--"
"Now, woe is me, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm.

9. "Last night I saw the bright new moon
With the old moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my master dear,
That we will come to harm."

10. They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the sky grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And angry grew the sea.

11. The anchors broke, the topmast split,
It was such a deadly storm:
The waves came over the broken ship
Till all her sides were torn.

12. O loath, loath were our gude Scots lords
To wet their cork-heeled shoes;
But long before the play was played
Their broad hats they did lose.

13. O long, long may the ladies sit
With their fans into their hand,
Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
Come sailing to the sand.

14. And long, long may the maidens sit
With their gold combs in their hair,
A-waiting for their own dear loves,
For they'll see them no more.

15. Halfway over to Aberdeen,
'Tis fifty Fathoms deep;
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
With the Scots lords at his feet.

Questions and Activities

1. In your own words, write the story of "Sir Patrick Spens."

2. How do the sailors react to Sir Patrick's order to make ready to sail?

3. Do the Scots lords remain faithful to Sir Patrick to the end? Explain.

4. Make a list of the words that you don't understand. Can you guess their meanings?

5. What nationality is Sir Patrick? How do you know?

6. Why do you think that the "older knight" (stanza two) suggested Sir Patrick for the mission? What is the relationship of the older knight to the king? How do you know?

7. Does stanza five in any way explain the action of the older knight?

8. Explain these lines from stanza eight:
But long before the play was played,
Their broad hats they did lose.
Do these lines give a hint about the outcome of the ballad?

9. What part do the ladies play in the ballad?

10. Do we learn anything about the character of Sir Patrick? Explain. What kind of man was he?

11. In stanza one, the wine is described as "blude-red." What effect does that particular description have on the ballad?

12. In stanza three, we find that Sir Patrick was walking on the sand. Why do you think he was not at court with the king?

13. When Sir Patrick receives the letter (stanza four), he first laughs and then cries. Why?

14. Name some important things that we are <u>told</u> about the plot of the story. Name some important things that we must guess at. Can we always arrive at a clear-cut answer?

Assignment 2

Read the ballad aloud. Try to read it as naturally as you can. The best way to read naturally is to forget that it is a poem and

read it as if it were prose. Try to follow the natural stresses of the words and the natural rhythms of the sentences.

Questions and Activities

1. How many stressed syllables are in each line of each stanza? How do the stanzas rhyme?

2. Are all of the rhymes in the poem exact?

3. Notice that the ballad has no introduction. The action starts immediately. Why do you think this is the case?

4. Write your own story of Sir Patrick Spens. In your story, answer all the questions that the reader might ask. Tell why Sir Patrick was not at court, explain why the king thought the mission was important, and so on. Which is more interesting and intriguing, your story or the ballad? Explain.

5. Identify the beginning, middle, and end of the ballad.

6. What is the high point in the action of the story? Why?

7. What are the similarities between "Bishop Hatto" and "Sir Patrick Spens"? What are the differences?

8. Does whoever is telling the story show how he feels about any of the people in the story? Does he say they are right or wrong in what they do? Is he saying anything, in a general way, about man and his world?

Assignment 3: "Johnnie Armstrong"

Read "Johnnie Armstrong" silently as your teacher plays the recording. Reread the ballad until you understand it. Discuss with your teacher any parts of the story which you did not understand.

Johnnie Armstrong

1. There dwelt a man in fair Westmoreland,
   Johnnie Armstrong men did him call;
   He had neither land nor rents coming in,
   Yet he kept eight score men in his hall.

2. He had horse and harness for them all,
   Fine steeds all milky white;
   The golden bands about their necks,
   And their weapons, were all alike.

3. News was then brought unto the king,
That there was such a one as he,
That he lived free as a bold outlaw
And robbed all the north country.

4. The king he wrote a letter then,
He wrote it large and long;
He signed it with his royal hand
And promised to do him no wrong.

5. When this letter came to Johnnie,
His heart was blithe as birds on the tree.
"Never was an Armstrong sent for by the king;
Not my father, my grandfather, nor none but me.

6. "And if we go before the king,
We must go right orderly;
Each man of you shall have his scarlet coat,
Laced with silver laces three.

7. "Each one shall have his velvet coat,
Laced with silver lace so white,
With the golden bands about your necks,
Black hats and white feathers alike."

8. By the morrow morning at ten of the clock
To Edinburgh gone was he;
And with him all of his eight score men--
A goodly sight for to see!

9. When Johnnie came before the king
He sank down on his knee;
"O pardon, my sovereign liege," he cried.
"Pardon my eight score men and me.

10. "Thou shalt have no pardon, thou traitor bold,
Not thy eight score men nor thee;
Tomorrow morning at ten of the clock
Thou shalt all hang on the gallows tree."

11. Johnnie looked over his left shoulder,
And a grievous look looked he;
Saying, "Asking grace of a graceless face--
Why there is none for you nor me."

12. Saying, "Fight on, fight on, my merry men,
And see that none of you be taken
For rather than men shall say we were hanged,
Let them say how we were slain."

13. Then like a madman Johnnie laid about,
Like a madman then fought-he,
Until a coward Scot came at Johnnie behind
And ran him through his fair body.

14. Johnnie cried, "Fight on, my merry men all,
    And see that none of you be ta'en.
I'll lie me down to bleed for a while,
    Then I'll rise and fight again."

Questions and Activities

1. How many men did Johnnie keep?

2. Tell the story in your own words.

3. Why did the king want to capture Johnnie?

4. Did you notice that colors play an important part in the ballad? Describe the dress of Johnnie's men.

5. How many changes of setting do you recognize in the ballad? Write a description of each setting.

6. Although most ballads plunge right into the story, the actual story of Johnnie Armstrong does not begin with the first line. Where does the story really begin?

7. Look up the meaning of "perfidy." What part does perfidy play in this ballad?

8. What is the king's outstanding characteristic? Which person, the king or Johnnie, do you admire more? Why?

9. What kind of life did Johnnie and his men have in their borderland home? The "yet" in stanza one is very important. What does it tell about Johnnie and his men?

10. The subject matter of "Sir Patrick Spens" and "Johnnie Armstrong" is very similar. List all the points related to subject matter which these two ballads have in common.

11. The use of repetition is characteristic of ballads. See if you can find good examples of repetition in "Johnnie Armstrong."

12. How many of the fourteen stanzas involve conversation? Why do you suppose the balladeer prefers to use conversation rather than description?

13. With whom do you sympathize, Johnnie or the king? Why?

14. Does the balladeer side with either the king or Johnnie? What characteristic of the ballad does this point of view demonstrate?

15. Does the ballad present a system of values? That is, does it imply that some of men's actions are better or worse than others? Explain the system of values in "Johnnie Armstrong."

16. Is the form of "Johnnie Armstrong" like that of "Sir Patrick Spens"? Explain.

Assignment 4: "Jesse James"

Jesse James

1. Jesse James was a lad that killed many a man.
   He robbed the Danville train.
   But that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard
   Has laid poor Jesse in the grave.

2. It was Robert Ford, that dirty little coward,
   I wonder how he does feel;
   For he ate of Jesse's bread and slept in Jesse's bed
   And laid poor Jesse in the grave.

   Poor Jesse had a wife to mourn for his life,
   His children they were brave;
   But that dirty little coward that shot Mr. Howard
   And laid poor Jesse in the grave!

3. It was his brother Frank who robbed the Gallatin bank
   And carried the money from the town.
   It was at this very place they had a little chase,
   For they shot Capt. Sheets to the ground.

4. They went to the crossing not very far from here,
   And there they did the same;
   With the agent on his knees he delivered up the keys
   To the outlaws Frank and Jesse James.

5. It was on Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright,
   They robbed the Glendale train.
   The people they did say, for many miles away,
   It was robbed by Frank and Jesse James.

6. It was on a Saturday night, Jesse was at home,
   Talking with his family brave.
   Robert Ford came along like a thief in the night
   And laid poor Jesse in the grave.

7. The people held their breath when they heard of Jesse's death
   And wondered how he ever came to die.
   It was one of the gang called little Robert Ford,
   He shot poor Jesse on the sly.

8. This song was made by Billy Gashade
As soon as the news did arrive.
He said there is no man with the law in his hand
Can take Jesse James when alive.

Questions and Activities

1. Who is the villain of the poem? Why

2. What do the title heroes of "Jesse James" and "Johnnie Armstrong" have in common?

3. Name some characters in American history who would make good subjects for ballads.

4. Does this "modern" ballad contain traditional ballad forms of rhyme, rhythm, and refrain? Examples?

5. Who wrote the ballad of Jesse James? If we know who wrote it, can we still call it a ballad? Why?

6. To what famous character of song, story, and legend can you compare Jesse James?

7. Could Jesse James be called "an American folk hero"? Explain.

8. Does the author show his attitude toward the characters? How so? What is that attitude?

9. What does the balladeer seem to think makes Robert Ford's action particularly bad?

10. What does the balladeer do to make us feel pity for Jesse?

11. Explain some of the things that you learn about Jesse from the ballad. Does some of what you learn seem to be historically accurate? Does some appear to be myth? Explain.

12. Using the material from the poem, write your own prose version of the life and death of Jesse James.

13. Which hero seems more realistic to you, Jesse James or Johnnie Armstrong? Why? Who is Mister Howard? Why is this name included in the ballad?

14. Why do you think the balladeer does not tell us the reasons for the villain's action. Can you guess those reasons?

15. Can you find any examples of incremental repetition in "Jesse James"? Explain how they add to your understanding of the ballad.

Assignment 4

When you began the study of the ballad, your teacher did not give you a definition of the ballad to memorize. Now that you have studied several ballads carefully from the standpoints of subject-matter, form, and point of view, you should be able to identify several characteristics which, when put together, will serve as a reasonable definition and will show whether or not you understand the ballad as a literary form. With this in mind answer the following questions:

1. With what subject-matter does the ballad deal?

2. Does a ballad tell a complete story of a complete event, or does it tell a part of one episode which occurs quite close to the climax of an event?

3. Is the vocabulary of the ballad difficult? Determine this by recalling your observations about the length of the words in the ballads you have read. Consider also the comparisons you made when examining the spelling of some words from older ballads.

4. Is there much repetition of the same line or parts of lines in the ballad?

5. Is there much conversation in the ballads you have studied?

6. Is the balladeer ever a character in the ballad or does he tell about something that happened to others?

7. Are ballads ever sung?

8. By using the answers to the above questions, write a definition of a ballad by completing the following statement: "A ballad is a song that....." You may need to write several sentences.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

THE LITERARY BALLAD

Literature Curriculum I

Student Version

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I. "The Highwayman," Alfred Noyes

Although Alfred Noyes is a twentieth century writer, he shows his knowledge of past ages in such long poems as "Drake," in which he tells of the famous Elizabethan navigator and explorer, and in shorter poems such as "The Highwayman." Noyes tells his tales of the romantic past successfully because of his skillful employment of rhyme, rhythm, vivid words, and colorful events. Read this poem for the exciting, moving tale it tells.

Text--In Story Poems, pp. 96-100

About Alfred Noyes:

Alfred Noyes was born in 1880 in Staffordshire and was educated at Oxford. During the early years of World War I, he served his country on a mine destroyer that patrolled the Baltic Sea. He was a professor of poetry at Princeton from 1914 to 1923. He further strengthened his ties with the New World by marrying an American. During World War II, he lived in California and taught at the University of California.

Although Noyes is best known for "The Highwayman," he has published extensively. In addition to his narrative and lyric poetry, he has written many short stories, essays, a few plays, and several critical studies of famous authors.

Questions and Activities

1. Carefully read "The Highwayman." Make certain that you understand the story. Your teacher will explain anything that you do not understand. Be prepared to read the ballad aloud.

2. This poem paints very clear pictures of people and places. In his mind's eye, the reader can see the highwayman, the inn, Bess, and the redcoats. Your teacher has selected a number of words, phrases, and clauses which describe the appearance of certain people or places in the poem or which tell of the actions of the people involved. Can you connect these words, phrases, and clauses with the correct person or thing?

3. In your own words, briefly tell or write the story of "The Highwayman."

4. List the last words of each line in stanzas one to six and join with a curved line the words which rhyme. Notice the pattern.

5. What do you observe about the last word in the fourth and fifth line of each stanza?

6. Why did the Redcoats bind a musket at the girl's breast?

7. Do the characters in "The Highwayman" seem "real" to you? Explain.

8. When the highwayman heard that Bess had sacrificed her life to save him, he turned back to seek revenge. What kind of person does this show him to be?

9. What other ballads have you read in which a person sacrifices his own life for the sake of someone else? Sir Patrick Spens and his men sacrificed their lives for their king. Bess sacrificed her life for the man she loved. Which sacrifice do you think demanded the greater courage? Were both sacrifices made for love?

10. In stanza five, you will find a good example of one of the characteristic devices of the balladeer. What is that device? Explain.

11. Dialogue is limited in this ballad. Where do you find any? How does the poet use the words of the highwayman so that there appears to be more dialogue in the poem than there actually is?

12. Explain why you think a metrical pattern and perhaps rhyme are important in a poem.

13. Is the author of this poem telling about something that happened to himself? Do you know how the poet feels about the king's men, the highwayman, and Bess? Explain.

14. How do you think King George's men knew about the plan of the highwayman?

15. What happened to the landlord himself? What happened to Tim?

16. Ask your teacher to explain <u>metaphor</u> and <u>onomatopoeia</u>. Can you find examples of these two devices in the poem? (By the way, how long do you think it would take you to remember the spelling of <u>onomatopoeia</u>? Do you think it's important that you know how to spell it?)

17. What similarities and dissimilarities in <u>form</u> do you see in this ballad and in "Johnnie Armstrong?" Do you find any other similarities or dissimilarities?

18. Look up the meaning of the word "theme" in your dictionary. You will find several definitions, but one of them applies to an element of all literary works. Can you determine which one that is? Have your teacher discuss the meaning of "theme" in a work of literature with you. Do "Johnnie Armstrong," "Jesse James," and "The Highwayman" all have a similar theme? In your own words, could you state that theme?

II. "Danny Deever," Rudyard Kipling

About Rudyard Kipling

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) is one of England's most famous poets and surely one of the most popular poets of all time. Most of us have heard his narrative poem "Gunga Din" and other of his works which are so widely read and quoted that they have almost become a part of the folk heritage. Even though Kipling did not live long in India, his stories about that country have become so popular that to many people the name "Kipling" means "India." Perhaps his most famous poem, "Gunga Din," is about an Indian watercarrier attached to the British army. (You may want to read this narrative; you will find it on pages 7-9 of Story Poems.) And, of course, every bathtub baritone knows and loves "On the Road to Mandalay," another of Kipling's poems. Actually, though Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, he spent most of his early years getting an education in England and returned to India only when he was seventeen. Before he was twenty-five, the short stories and poems he wrote while working as a newspaperman in India made him famous in England as well as India. The color, excitement, and mystery of India provided him with plenty of material for his works. He had met all types of interesting people--English soldiers, Indian soldiers, government officials, businessmen. In "Danny Deever," Kipling uses Cockney dialect, the type of dialect spoken by those English soldiers who come from the eastern part of London.

Danny Deever

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square--they're hangin' him today;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files-on-Parade.
"A touch o'sun, a touch o'sun," the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of him round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound--
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an'far to-night," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'--you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the Regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," t he Colour Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quick-step play,
The Regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', and they'll want their beer today,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

Questions and Activities

1. Why was Danny Deever hanged?

2. Point out phrases which show the reaction of Files-on-Parade to Danny's hanging.

3. Does the Cockney speech add to or detract from the poem?

4. Does Files-on-Parade know Danny well? How do you know?

5. In your own words, briefly tell or write the story of "Danny Deever."

6. What is the reason for removing the buttons and stripes from Danny's uniform?

7. What background information about Danny's life can you gather from the poem?

8. Who is responsible for hanging Danny Deever?

9. Does this ballad contain incremental repetition? Examples?

10. How many people are talking in this poem? Who are they?

11. Point out some of the ways in which the poet increases the terror of what happens to Danny.

12. Why do you suppose that Files-on-Parade says that Danny's soul is whimpering as it passes overhead?

13. Look at the ballad again. How many stories are being told at the same time? Which section of the poem handles each story?

14. What is the rhythm pattern of the poem?

15. Do you notice anything interesting in the way the poem is typed on the page?

16. How many different attitudes toward Danny Deever's death are presented in this poem? For instance, is the Colour-Sergeant's reaction different from that of Files-on-Parade? If so, why?

17. Can you tell what the poet's attitude to Danny Deever's death is? How would you go about describing his attitude?

18. Ask your teacher to explain the meaning of "figures of speech" to you. Do you find any figures of speech in "Danny Deever?"

19. Look up the meaning of "paradox." Discuss the meaning of the word with your teacher. Can you find a paradox in the second stanza of the poem? Can you explain it?

III. "Abdul Abulbul Amir," author unknown (in Story Poems, pp. 331-333)

Questions and Activities

1. What are the nationalities of the two main characters in the poem? How do you know?

2. What brought on the fight?

3. In your own words, briefly tell or write the story of "Abdul Abulbul Amir."

4. Who is the Prophet? (See stanza one.)

5. Do you notice anything in the rhyming of this poem that is different from the rhyme of the other poems that you have read? (Look very carefully at these lines: "When they wanted a man to encourage the van, / Or harass the foe from the rear, / Storm fort or redoubt, they were sure to call out / For Abdul Abulbul Amir." Underline all the rhyming words in the lines.)

6. Does the last stanza remind you of any other ballad you have read? Explain.

7. Look up the meanings of all unfamiliar words.

8. What appeals to you most about the poem?

9. Be prepared to read the peom aloud.

10. What main characteristics can you see that differentiate this "literary ballad" from the traditional ballads that you have read?

11. In the ballad, who died and how?

12. Can you find at least one figure of speech in the poem?

13. Using the rhyme and meter of the original, rewrite the last three stanzas so that everything in the poem is explained to your satisfaction. You may add additional stanzas if you choose.

14. What sort of man is Ivan? Explain.

15. Explain stanza ten.

16. Is the poem serious or humorous or a mixture? Explain.

17. Does the poem imply a value system? Explain.

18. Ask your teacher to explain the meaning of "satire." Are there elements of satire in the poem?

19. What is the author's attitude toward his subject? Explain how you know.

20. Look up the meaning of the word "honor." Discuss the meaning with your teacher. What part does "honor" play in the poem?

IV. "The Springhill Disaster," by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger

(See Harold Leventhal Management, Inc.: "The Ballad of Springhill" ("Springhill Disaster") by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, selection printed by Stormking Music, Inc.)

Questions and Activities

1. Below is a list of historical events with which you may be familiar. Can you think of a heading which would serve to show what all of these events have in common? Can you, in other words, classify these events under one, all-inclusive term?
   The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius (79 A.D.)
   The sinking of the Titanic (1912)
   The London Fire (1666)
   The San Francisco Earthquake (1906)
   The Mississippi Flood (1937)
   The Santo Domingo Hurricane (1930)

2. In your own words, briefly tell or write the story of "The Springhill Disaster."

3. Your teacher may ask you to sing this ballad. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger composed both the words and the music. By singing the ballad, you will find that you are much better able to appreciate the total work.

4. In stanza one, what are "the roads that never saw sun nor sky?"

5. "Sir Patrick Spens" tells of a sea disaster; "The Avondale Mine Disaster" tells of a mine tragedy which took place in Avondale, Pennsylvania; "The Titanic" tells of a tragedy at sea which took 1,513 lives. From this small sampling what can you conclude about the subject matter of some ballads? In one sentence state the subject matter of "The Springhill Disaster." What conclusion can you draw about the suitability of the ballad form for this particular subject? If you were asked to write a poem about one of the historical events in Assignment 1, do you think you would be wise to choose the ballad form? Why? Maybe you would like to write a ballad about one of the events in Assignment 1. Your ballad need not be long. Two stanzas of four lines each would be sufficient.

6. Read the ballad carefully once more. Then answer the following questions:

Where did the disaster take place?
When did the disaster take place?
What caused the disaster?
What kind of mineral was being mined?
What was the name of the mine?
How many were trapped in the mine?
Were the bodies of all the dead found?
How many were saved?
How was the rescue made?
What happened to the mines after the disaster?
What happened to those who were rescued?

7. Are there any words in this ballad which you had to look up in the dictionary? If you recall the simple language of the other ballads you have studied, what conclusion can you draw about the typical language employed by the balladeer?

8. Do the authors express their feelings about the disaster? What can you say is the typical point of view of the balladeer?

9. Does this ballad seem more "modern" to you than some of the others? Explain why.

10. Do you think that the authors might have had a social or political reason for composing their work? Explain.

11. Do you find any <u>irony</u> in the last stanza? Explain.

12. The word "grave" in the last stanza of the poem plays a very important part in the work. Why? Does "grave" have several meanings in the poem? Explain. How many references to graves are there in the poem?

V. "The Quarry," W. H. Auden

(For selection, see "The Quarry" by W. H. Auden, copyright 1937, Random House, Inc., New York. Reprinted from Selected Poems of W. H. Auden.)

Questions and Activities

1. In your own words, tell or write the story of "The Quarry."
2. Who speaks in the poem?
3. Do we know why the soldiers are coming?
4. Do we feel that the soldiers are good or bad?
5. Can you identify the beginning, the middle, and the end of the poem?
6. In what way is "The Quarry" similar to "The Highwayman?"
7. You have studied several ballads, and by this time, you should be able to identify certain characteristics of the genre. How many of the following techniques can you find in "The Quarry?" In what ways do they add to the effect of the poem?

use of repetition	rhyme and rhythm
use of precise details	impersonal tone

8. What is the woman's attitude?
9. What is the man's attitude?
10. Look up the meaning of "frustration." Does this word in any way describe your reaction to "The Quarry?" Explain.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

A BOOK OF BALLADS

Literature Curriculum I

Student Version

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A BOOK OF BALLADS

In this pamphlet you will find the words to the ballads that are sung on the ballad tape. You will probably want to refer to these texts during class discussion of the various ballads. They are also handy if there are any of the ballads you want to memorize.

If you are interested in ballads, and some of the problems connected with collecting and singing ballads, your teacher has another tape containing additional songs and a discussion of some of the variant versions.

1. "The Devil and the Farmer's Wife"

There was an old farmer lived on a hill;
If he ain't moved away he's living there still.
Fy diddle I diddle I dy
Fy diddle I day.

Well, the devil came up to him one day,
Says, "one of your family I'm going to take away."

"Oh, please don't take my eldest son;
There's work on the farm that's got to be done."

"Nope. All I want is that wife of yours."
"Well, you can have her and welcome I'm sure."

So the devil he hoisted her up on his back,
And he looked like a rooster scared off the rack.

He took her down to the gates of hell,
Says, "Poke up the fire, boys, we'll scorch her well."

But three little devils in ball and chain,
She lifted her foot and kicked out their brains.

Nine little devils went over the wall,
Said, "Take her back daddy, before she kills us all."

So early next morning I spied through a crack,
And seen the old devil come dragging her back.

He said, "Here's your wife, both sound and well;
If I'd kept her any longer it'd really been hell."

Now this song goes to show what a woman can do;
She can lump out her husband and the devil too.

Shows how the women are worse than the men:
They went down to hell and got kicked out again.

2. "Barbry Allen"

In Scotland I was bred and born,
In Scotland was my dwelling O.
I fell in love with a nice young girl,
And her name was Barbry Allen O,
And her name was Barbry Allen.

I courted her for many long years,
And I could not court her longer O.
So I fell sick and very ill,
And I sent for Barbry Allen O,
And I sent for Barbry Allen.

And when she came to my bedside,
She says, "Young man, you're dying O."
I says, "O dying it never can be,
One kiss from you would cure me O."
"One kiss from me you'll never get,
Long as your hard heart's a breaking O,
Long as your hard heart's a breaking.

"Don't you remember in yonders town,
In yonders town a-drinking,
You gave a health to the ladies round,
But you slighted Barbry Allen O,
But you slighted Barbry Allen."

"Oh yes, I remember, remember it well,
In yonders town a-drinking O,
I have a health to the ladies around,
And my heart to Barbry Allen O,
And my heart to Barbry Allen.

"Well, I put some poison in your drink,
For your proud heart was swelling O.
It's adieu to you and adieu to me,
Remember Barbry Allen O,
Remember Barbry Allen."

As she went home across the fields,
She heard my death knell tolling O,
And with every toll it seemed to say,
"Hardhearted Barbry Allen O,
Hardhearted Barbry Allen."

"Mother, mother, go make my bed,
Go make it neat and narrow;
Sweet William died for me today,
And I'll die for him tomorrow,
And I'll die for him tomorrow.

"Father, father, go dig my grave,
Go dig it deep and narrow;
Sweet William died for the love of me,
And I will die of sorrow,
And I will die of sorrow."

They buried me in the old churchyard,
And Barbry's grave was nigh me O,
And from her heart there grew a red rose,
And from my heart a briar O,
And from my heart a briar.

We grew and we grew up the old church wall,
Till we couldn't grow no higher O,
And there we tied a true lovers' knot,
The red rose and the briar O,
The red rose and the briar.

3. "Edward Edward"

"What is that blood on the point of your knife,
My son, now tell to me."
"Well, it is the blood of my old hound dog,
Who chased the fox for me,
Who chased the fox for me."

"That is too red for your old hound dog,
My son, now tell to me."
"Well, then it is the blood of my old gray mare
Who plowed the fields with me,
Who plowed the fields with me."

"That is too red for your old gray mare,
My son, now tell to me."
"Well, then it is the blood of my father dear,
Who came to the fields for me,
Who came to the fields for me."

"What penance will you do for that,
My son, now tell to me."
"I'll set my foot in yonder boat,
And I'll sail over the sea,
And I'll sail over the sea."

"What will you do with your towers and hall,
My son, now tell to me."
"I'll let them stand till they down fall,
For here I'll nevermore be,
For here I'll nevermore be."

"What will you leave to your babes and wife,
My son, now tell to me."
"The world's room, let them beg through life,
For them no more I'll see,
For them no more I'll see."

"Then what will you leave to your mother dear,
My son, now tell to me."
"The curse of hell from me you'll bear,
Such counsels you gave me,
Such counsels you gave me."

4. "Babylon"

There were three sisters lived in a bower,
Falalee and lonely O,
They went out to pick some flowers,
On the bonny bonny banks of the Virgio.

They had not picked but barely one,
When up and jumped a banished man,

He took the first one by the hand,
He pulled her round, made her stand.

"Oh, will you be a robber's wife,
Or will you die by my pen knife?"

"No, I'll not be a robber's wife,
So I must die by your pen knife."

So he's taken out his long pen knife,
And there he took that young girl's life.

He took the second one by the hand,
He pulled her round, made her stand.

"Oh, will you be a robber's wife,
Or will you die by my pen knife."

"No, I'll not be no robber's wife,
So I must die by your pen knife."

He's taken out his long pen knife,
And there he took that young girl's life.

He took the third one by the hand,
He pulled her round, made her stand.

"Will you be a robber's wife,
Or will you die by my pen knife?"

"No, I'll not be no robber's wife,
Nor I'll not die by your pen knife.

"For I have a brother brave and free;
If you kill me then he'll kill thee."

"Oh, tell me what's your brother's name,
And tell me how he makes his gain."

"My brother's name is bold Babylon,
Robbing travellers he thrives on."

"Oh, sister, sister, what have I done?
I've killed my sisters all but one."

He's taken out his long pen knife,
And there he took his own dear life.

5. "Lord Randall"

"Where have you been all the day, Randall, my son?
Where have you been all the day, my pretty one?"
"I've been to my sweetheart's, mother,
I've been to my sweetheart's, mother;
Please make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What have you been eating there, Randall, my son?
What have you been eating there, my pretty one?"
"Eels and eels' broth, mother;
Eels and eels' broth, mother;
Now make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What was the color of their skins, Randall, my son?
What was the color of their skins, my pretty one?"
"Spickle and sparkle, mother;
Spickle and sparkle, mother;
Now make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"Where did she get them from, Randall, my son?
Where did she get them from, my pretty one?"
"From hedges and ditches, mother;
From hedges and ditches, mother;
Now make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What will you leave your family, Randall, my son?
What will you leave your family, my pretty one?"
"My gold and my silver, mother;
My gold and my silver, mother;
Please make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What will you leave your sweetheart, Randall, my son?
What will you leave your sweetheart, my pretty one?"
"A rope to hang her, mother;
A rope to hang her mother;
Now make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

6. "The Tenderfoot"

One day I thought I'd have some fun,
And see how punching cows was done,
So when the roundups had begun,
I tackled a cattle king.

He says, "My foreman is here in town,
He's in a saloon his name is Brown,
If you'll see him he'll show you around."
Says I, "That's just the thing."

As we rode out to the ranch next d
Brown jollied me all the way,
Said punching cows was only play.
It was no work at all.

All you've got to do is ride,
It's just like drifting with the tide,
That son of a gun, oh how he lied.
He certainly had his gall.

Sometimes them cattle would make a break
And across the prairie they would take,
Just like they was headed for a stake
To them it was nothing but play.

Sometimes they'd stumble and they'd fall,
Sometimes we couldn't head them at all,
Then we'd shoort by like a cannonball,
Till the ground got in our way.

They saddled me up an old gray hack,
With a great big set-fast on his back,
They padded him down with a gunny sack,
That was full of chaparral.

When I got on him he left the ground,
Went up in the air, circled around,
And I come down and I busted the ground,
Had one terrible fall.

They picked me up, they carried me in,
And they rubbed me down with an old tent pin,
"That's the way they all begin,
You're doing fine," says Brown.

"And tomorrow morning, if you don't die,
I'll give you another horse to try."
"Say, can I walk?" says I.
Says Brown, "Yes, back to town."

Now I've travelled up, I've travelled down,
I've travelled this wide world all around,
I've lived in the city, I've lived in town,
And I've got this much to say.

Before you try cowpunching, kiss your wife,
Take a great big insurance on your life,
Then cut your throat with a butcher knife,
For it's easier done that way.